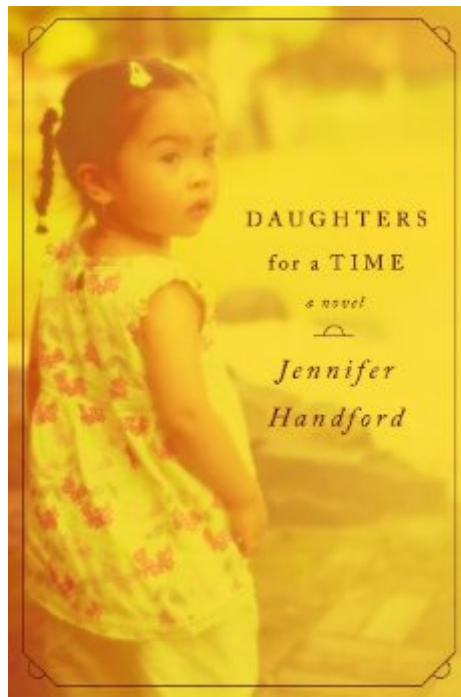


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# Daughters For A Time



## Synopsis

When Helen Francis was a child, her mother died and her father walked out, leaving her to be raised by her older sister. Now thirty-five, married, and trying to start a family of her own, Helen has moved on but never really healed from her traumatic childhood. She has always believed that a new baby would help fill the loss of what was taken from her at such a young age. After four years of trying to become pregnant, however, she is resigned to the fact that she will never be able to bear children. Halfheartedly accepting adoption as an alternative, Helen gradually embraces and grows excited over the prospect. And when her new baby is finally in her arms, true happiness washes over her. But her unimaginable bliss is dashed when she learns that Claire, the sister who raised and loved her throughout her childhood and adult life, has been diagnosed with cancer. For Helen, the pain of her childhood returns and the old wounds of abandonment are once again torn open. Balancing the joy of her new daughter with the painful experience of watching her sister, the physical embodiment of unconditional love in her life, slowly die, Helen must reconcile her inner feelings and heal her broken spirit. A heart-wrenching exploration of the ties that bind us and the lasting pain of childhood loss, *Daughters for a Time* is about longing for a family to heal a broken heart, experiencing unconditional love as a parent, and finding solid ground to stand on when suffering and elation have equally powerful holds on our life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As I read the opening page, I groaned inwardly...another whiny woman book. Within a couple of more pages I thought "but this whiny woman book is wonderfully written." And shortly thereafter, I abandoned the double W-word appellation, added the adjective "flawlessly" to "wonderfully" and ripped through this moving story in one day. This very wise book reminds the reader, in the final analysis, all we really can control in our lives is our attitude.

At the age of thirteen, Helen lost her mother to cancer and her father walked out, leaving Helen's older sister to become legal guardian to Helen. In one of the most difficult stages of childhood, Helen was crushed with the devastation of loss, and abandonment. As the years passed by, Claire managed to always be there for Helen, which lead Helen to move on with positive plans for her future, and education. Although Helen followed Claire's good advice, nothing removed the pain and suffering that took hold of Helen's life. At the age of twenty, Claire grew up overnight to become a mother to Helen. The two daughters dealt with grief, resentment and anger in different ways. How did the girls feel about their father having an affair while married to their mother? How close were the girls with their mother, and what did they miss the most? I highly recommend "DAUGHTERS FOR A TIME" to all fiction and literature lovers, who enjoy stories that are heartfelt and powerfully moving. Jennifer Handford delivers a first novel that will not only make you laugh and cry as it tugs at the heartstrings, but one that will make you crave for more. A mother dies at age forty, a father disappears from the foot of the earth, and two young girls struggle for survival in an ever-changing world. The reader can feel mixed-emotions as two girls are deprived of love, and family. The author clearly reminds us of what unconditional love is, the longing for a family, and the trauma of a broken heart. How many years did Helen try to get pregnant, and how did she feel about adoption? When did Helen have a miscarriage, and how many years was she depressed? What happened to Claire, and what did that do to Helen? The reader is taken through the life of one family, torn to pieces for different reasons from horrifying events that lead to wounds never healed, nor forgotten. Each page is filled with sadness, anger, resentment, and the desperate need to cope.

May contain a spoilerHelen, raised by her sister Claudia after her mother died when she was a teenager, is struggling with infertility. Her life feels complete after she adopts a baby girl and

reconnects with her estranged father, but then Claudia is diagnosed with ovarian cancer, which killed their mother. I had some trouble connecting with Helen on an emotional level, but I liked and respected her journey from adamantly insisting she couldn't adopt, to falling in love with her daughter. Jennifer Handford's writing style was easily readable and pleasant. She appeared to have researched Chinese adoptions well, which is why I cannot forgive her for having Claudia donate her eggs to Helen, after being diagnosed with ovarian cancer. That could never happen. Once you've had cancer, you can't donate anything but blood, and that's only after 10 years out of diagnosis. Manipulating the realities of cancer for melodrama is a slap in the face to cancer survivors and those who have lost a loved one to this very real disease. If not for this I might have given the book 3 stars.

As a mom to 2 children adopted from China, I have to take one large exception with this book. The book is set in the current year. Currently if you want to adopt a non special needs child from China, you are looking at a 5+ year wait. The time lines that the author describes used to be true in the early/mid 2000's but no longer. It bothers me because someone might read that and think they should adopt too and it gives false hopes. However, her description of the adoption trip was very accurate. And the coverage of attachment issues, also very accurate. In the first part of the book I was completely unsympathetic to the main character's feeling sorry for herself. Yes I suppose we all feel that way sometimes but I don't need to read so many chapters describing it in detail. You were sad. We get it. She was just very self absorbed and I guess I don't have a lot of patience with that :-). Just when you think I would give this one star, surprisingly the book did pull me in. The writing was good, and the sections around cancer were very well done. It brought me back to experiences with cancer with my own parents and I had a good cry reading it. Very cathartic! So in summary I would say, yes read it, bring your kleenex, but if you are interested in Chinese adoption don't be led astray about the initial process. Much harder than it was portrayed.

Wow! I don't normally read this genre, but was I ever pleased! What a wonderful story about love--between sisters, parents and their children, friends, and the power of family in all its forms! The longing to have a child is effectively expressed, and the main character must face this inability. Her journey allows her to experience her love for her mother and sister, her eventual forgiveness for her father, and her final joy at achieving motherhood through several very different avenues. Emotional, thoughtful, with a positive ending! Excellent!!!!

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